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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 59/118 of 10 December 2004, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

The present report refers to correspondence between the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations regarding actions taken by the Government of Israel in implementing the relevant provisions of the resolution. It also presents the information made available by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to the Secretary-General on the return of refugees registered with the Agency to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from places outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

* A/60/150.

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1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of paragraph 5 of its resolution 59/118 of 10 December 2004, entitled "Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities", the operative part of which reads:

> *The General Assembly,*
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> ...
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> 1. *Reaffirms* the right of all persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities to return to their homes or former places of residence in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
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> 2. *Expresses deep concern* that the mechanism agreed upon by the parties in article XII of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993 (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) on the return of displaced persons has not been complied with, and stresses the necessity for an accelerated return of displaced persons;
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> 3. *Endorses*, in the meanwhile, the efforts of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure, to persons in the area who are currently displaced and in serious need of continued assistance as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities;
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> 4. *Strongly appeals* to all Governments and to organizations and individuals to contribute generously to the Agency and to the other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned for the above-mentioned purposes;
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> 5. *Requests* the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General, to report to the General Assembly before its sixtieth session on the progress made with regard to the implementation of the present resolution.

2. On 24 May 2005, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under the resolution and requested the Permanent Representative to inform him of any action his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note verbale dated 12 July 2005, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

> From the outset, Israel would like to note that these resolutions come against the backdrop of positive developments in the region, including the impending unilateral disengagement of Israel from the Gaza Strip. It is disappointing to see that these resolutions do not take into account these new developments. Furthermore, they do not reflect the spirit of reform now prevalent in the United Nations General Assembly. Israel would like to have seen the language of these resolutions reflect more comprehensively the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and offer more productive steps.

It is the desire of the State of Israel to bring an end to all acts of violence and terror in the region, improve the humanitarian situation and achieve a negotiated settlement in the context of the Road Map. Towards that goal, Israel is taking a number of steps to promote peace and reinvigorate the peace process.

As Israel has previously stated, we support the humanitarian mission of UNRWA and recognize its important contribution to the welfare of the Palestinian refugees. Israel believes that UNRWA could be an important vehicle to promote peace and stability in the region. We remain concerned and dismayed, however, at a number of issues related to the misuse and politicization of UNRWA and the disregard to the campaign of terror waged against Israeli civilians by Palestinian terror organizations.

In order for UNRWA to remain an effective humanitarian organization, it must be free of any action or statement that exceeds the borders of its mandate. The extensive Palestinian terrorist infrastructure that has taken root in the Palestinian "refugee camps" severely jeopardizes the legitimacy and efficacy of UNRWA. While Israel fully understands that UNRWA does not have the means or authority to enforce security and public order, we urge UNRWA to draw attention to the misuse of "camps" by terrorist groups in blatant violation of Security Council resolutions and international law. The presence of terrorist groups within UNRWA establishments both poses a clear danger to the safety and security of the civilian population and also compromises the fulfilment of UNRWA's mission.

The State of Israel firmly holds that any resolution adopted regarding UNRWA must deal with its operations, and be free of extraneous political issues introduced to single out one country, to prejudice decisions meant for permanent status negotiations, or to promote the interests of one side of the conflict.

The State of Israel is in favour of consolidating UNRWA resolutions and removing any extraneous political language. This is consistent with the general efforts aimed at the reform and revitalization of the General Assembly's agenda.

Israel looks forward to continuing its cooperation and working relationship with UNRWA. Accordingly, Israel urges the Secretary-General and UNRWA to consider, together with the parties involved, ways in which the organization can enhance the fulfilment of UNRWA's mandate in an accountable and responsible manner in the best interests of those whom it has been charged to serve.

4. In connection with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 59/118, the Secretary-General has obtained from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA the information available to him on the return of refugees registered with the Agency. As indicated in previous reports on the subject, the Agency is not involved in any arrangements for the return of refugees nor is it involved in any arrangements for the return of displaced persons who are not registered as refugees. Its information is based on requests by returning registered refugees for transfer of their entitlements for services to the areas to which they have returned and subsequent correction of records. The Agency would not necessarily be aware of the return of any registered

refugees who did not request the provision of services. So far as is known to the Agency, from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005, 489 refugees registered with UNRWA returned to the West Bank and 74 to the Gaza Strip from places outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It should be noted that some of these may not themselves have been displaced in 1967, but may be members of the family of a displaced registered refugee. Thus, taking into account the estimate given in paragraph 4 of the previous report (A/59/151), the number of displaced registered refugees who are known by the Agency to have returned to the occupied territories since June 1967 is about 25,160. The Agency is unable to estimate the total number of displaced inhabitants who have returned. It keeps records only of registered refugees and, as pointed out above, even those records, particularly with respect to the location of registered refugees, may be incomplete.

5. In connection with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 59/118, the Secretary-General refers to the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005[1] and to the previous reports of the Commissioner-General for accounts of the continuous and ongoing assistance provided by UNRWA to persons displaced and in need of continued assistance.

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 13* (A/60/13) (to be issued).